

**MINUTES OF THE JULY MEETING OF LAOIS COUNTY COUNCIL HELD IN ÁRAS AN
CHONTAE ON THE 29TH OF JULY 2013**

PRESENT:	Councillors	Mary Sweeney	In the Chair
		Rotimi Adebari	William Aird
		John Bonham Paddy Bracken	
		Ben Brennan	Ray Cribbin
		James Daly	John Joe Fennelly
		Catherine Fitzgerald	Padraig Fleming
		David Goodwin	Alan Hand
		John King	Jerry Lodge
		Seamus McDonald	Paul Mitchell
		John Moran	Tom Mulhall
		Kathleen O' Brien	Brendan Phelan
		Martin Phelan	Lisa Delaney
		James Deegan	
		APOLOGIES:	Councillor

IN ATTENDANCE:

Messers Peter Carey, County Manager, Kieran Kehoe, Director of Services, Gerry Murphy, Head of Finance, Ms. Anna Marie Delaney, Director of Services, Ms. Josephine Kavanagh, Administrative Officer & Ms. Michelle McCormack, Executive Secretary.

68. VOTE OF SYMPATHY

On the proposition of Councillor Mary Sweeney, Cathaoirleach, a vote of sympathy was extended to Councillor Michael Lalor on the recent death of his wife Mary. The proposal was seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly and it was unanimously agreed that the meeting be adjourned for a period of 15 minutes as a mark of respect to the Lalor Family, Cardtown, Camross, Mountrath, Co. Laois.

69. CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE JUNE MEETING OF LAOIS COUNTY COUNCIL HELD ON THE 24TH OF JUNE 2013

On the proposition of Councillor Jerry Lodge seconded by Councillor John Moran, the Minutes of the June Meeting held on the 24th of June 2013 were confirmed subject to the following amendments:

Item No: 67 - Councillor Padraig Fleming proposed the removal of reference to the immediate review of the County Development Plan.

Item No: 59 – Councillor Fennelly proposed that the Members be informed of future developments at this location.

Item No: 60 – Councillor Daly requested that the Members be briefed regarding the naming of the proposed new Municipal Districts.

70. CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON THE 24TH OF JUNE 2013

On the proposition of Councillor Jerry Lodge seconded by Councillor John Moran, the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on the 24th of June 2013 were confirmed as circulated.

71. DISPOSAL OF LAND UNDER SECTION 183 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT, 2001

- (i) DISPOSAL OF 362 MARKET MEWS, MARYBOROUGH VILLAGE, PORTLAOISE, CO. LAOIS IN THE TOWNLAND OF CLONROOSK LITTLE FOR A CONSIDERATION OF €65,000**

On the proposition of Councillor John Joe Fennelly seconded by Councillor William Aird, the Members unanimously agreed to the disposal of 362 Market Mews, Maryborough Village, Portlaoise, Co. Laois in the townland of Clonroosk Little for a consideration of €65,000

- (ii) DISPOSAL OF 410 MARKET MEWS, MARYBOROUGH VILLAGE, MOUNTRATH ROAD, PORTLAOISE, CO. LAOIS IN THE TOWNLAND OF CLONROOSK LITTLE FOR A CONSIDERATION OF €65,000**

On the proposition of Councillor Kathleen O' Brien seconded by Councillor Rotimi Adebari, the Members unanimously agreed to the disposal of 410 Market Mews , Maryborough Village, Mountrath Road, Portlaoise, Co. Laois, in the townland of Clonroosk Little for a consideration of €65,000

- (iii) DISPOSAL OF 365 MARKET MEWS, MARYBOROUGH VILLAGE, PORTLAOISE, CO. LAOIS IN THE TOWNLAND OF CLONROOSK LITTLE FOR A CONSIDERATION OF €65,000**

On the proposition of Councillor William Aird seconded by Councillor Mary Sweeney, the Members unanimously agreed to the disposal of 365 Market Mews, Marborough Village, Portlaoise, Co. Laois in the townalnd of Clonroosk Little for a consideration of €65,000

72. ADDITIONAL ROADWORKS PROGRAMME (RESTORATION IMPROVEMENT) 2013

The Members were circulated with a copy of details on the proposed additional Roadworks Programme (Restoration Improvement) 2013. Mr. Kieran Kehoe, Director of Services briefed the Members on same and responded to the various queries raised. The Members welcomed the additional monies.

On the proposition of Councillor David Goodwin seconded by Councillor John King, the Members unanimously adopted the additional Roadworks Programme (Restoration Improvement) 2013

73. ADDITIONAL FUNDING UNDER RURAL WATER PROGRAMME

The Members were circulated with a copy of correspondence from the Department of the Environment, Community & Local Government dated the 11th of July 2013 with details of the additional funding under the Rural Water Programme

Following a recent review of the 2013 Rural Water Programme allocations an additional allocation of €660,000 is being awarded to Laois County Council. The Members were advised that this €660,000 is in addition to the total block grant allocation of €819,301 notified to the Council under the programme on the 28th of March 2013 bringing the total 2013 block grant allocation to €1,479,301.

Mr. Kieran Kehoe, Director of Services responded to the various queries raised. On the proposition of Councillor James Deegan seconded by Councillor Ben Brennan, the Members unanimously agreed to the additional funding under Rural Water Programme as circulated. The Members complimented the Water Services Staff on securing the additional monies.

The Members had some queries in relation to Irish Water and the Director of Services indicated that he would give them a presentation at the September meeting of Laois County Council.

74. TAKING IN CHARGE

(i) TAKING IN CHARGE OF WILTON LAWNS, SANDY LANE, PORTARLINGTON

On the proposition of Councillor Paul Mitchell seconded by Councillor Tom Mulhall, the Members unanimously agreed to the taking in charge of Wilton Lawns, Sandy Lane, Portarlington, Co. Laois.

(ii) TAKING IN CHARGE OF 'HEATHFIELDS', DUBLIN ROAD, PORTLAOISE

On the proposition of Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald seconded by Councillor William Aird, the Members unanimously agreed to the taking in charge of 'Heathfields', Dublin Road, Portlaoise, Co. Laois. (Phase 1)

(iii) TAKING IN CHARGE OF 'ABBEYCOURT', ABBEYLEIX ROAD, PORTLAOISE

On the proposition of Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald seconded by Councillor William Aird, the Members unanimously agreed to the taking in charge of 'Abbeycourt', Abbeyleix Road, Portlaoise, Co. Laois.

75. UPDATE ON PUBLIC SERVICE AGREEMENT 2012-2014 – IMPLEMENTATION BODY THIRD PROGRESS REPORT

Ms. Anna Marie Delaney, Director of Services briefed the Member on the Public Service Agreement 2012 – 2014. Ms. Delaney advised that the Implementation Body for the Public Service Agreement 2010 – 2014 published its third progress report in early July 2013. The Board's assessment of progress made across all sectors of the public service covers a 9 month period from the 1st of April 2012 to the 31st of December 2012. The Members were advised of the following progress achieved by Laois County Council from April 2012 – December 2012

Non-pay efficiency savings of €600,000 achieved for the reporting period. These savings were achieved through a number of measures. Substantial savings of €330,000 were achieved by the construction of a new Water Treatment Plant at Derrymoyle negating the need for Laois County Council to purchase water at a commercial rate from Carlow County Council. Closure of Area Offices, re-structuring and rationalisation of operations resulted in savings of over €60,000

Many other combined smaller initiatives allowed Laois County Council to achieve its savings of €600,000 for the period of the review.

Reduction in staff numbers for Laois County Council for the 9 month period was a total of 5 staff (Note: total staff reduction for the period 2008 to June 30th 2013 is 96.7 staff plus 30 temporary contracts which were terminated during that time).

Laois County Council continue to provide a quality service to the people of Laois despite significant staff reductions due to flexibilities in staff re-assignments, etc. Considerable progress has been achieved to date and the Director of Services acknowledged the continued co-operation of Elected Members and Staff in this regard.

Councillor William Aird proposed that this matter be tabled on the agenda for the September meeting of Laois County Council for further discussion. This proposal was seconded by Councillor Brendan Phelan.

The County Manager, Mr. Peter Carey acknowledged the co-operation of Staff & Elected Members and also re-iterated that it is an ongoing programme during very difficult times. There will be a further discussion on same at the September meeting of Laois County Council.

76. PRESENTATION BY LAOIS COMHAIRLE NA NOG

Ms. Georgina Ireland, Administrative Officer welcomed Lysagh, Chairperson of Comhairle na nOg together with Michaela, Bob, Joy, Ger, to the Chamber to deliver their presentation. They spoke about the background of Comhairle na Nog, the projects being worked on, communications between young people and the Comhairle itself.

The Members thanked Comhairle for their very informative presentation and wished them every success in their future endeavours.

77. PRESENTATION BY LAOIS WIND ENERGY AWARENESS GROUP

The Cathaoirleach welcomed the Laois Wind Energy Awareness Group to the Chamber to deliver their presentation. In attendance were Mr. Ray Conroy, Chairperson & Mr. Kevin Scully, Secretary. Also in attendance was Mr. Michael Keane & his wife Dorothy from Roscommon who have two wind turbines situated close to their home. Mr. Keane spoke as part of the presentation and outlined the various effects of the wind turbines on their health.

The Cathaoirleach & Members of Laois County Council thanked the group for their presentation and also thanked Mr. & Mrs. Keane for putting forward their experiences.

78. VOTE OF CONGRATULATIONS

On the proposition of Councillor John Moran, the Members unanimously extended a vote of congratulations to Mr. John Whelan & Mr. Eamon Treacy following their victory in the World Ploughing Championships in Canada. Mr. John Whelan from Wexford & Mr. Eamon Treacy from Carlow won Gold and Bronze in their competition classes.

A vote of congratulations was also passed to Mr. John Bonham on his nomination as Chairman of the Midland Regional Authority.

79. CORRESPONDENCE

The Members were circulated with correspondence dated the 4th July 2013 received from the Department of the Environment, Community & Local Government in relation to the Review of the Wind Energy Guidelines – an update for Local Authorities.

80. NOTICE OF MOTIONS

Notice of Motion No: 20/2013

Councillor Jerry Lodge proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That this Council be informed of the implications for Laois of the recent High Court Judgement of Fortune v Wicklow County Council”

This motion was seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly. The Members were advised that this matter relates to an individual house, which was subject to legal proceedings. Laois County Council continues to apply the planning enforcement code in the interests of proper planning and sustainable development.

Notice of Motion No: 21/2013

Councillor Jerry Lodge proposed the following Notice of Motion

“That this Council calls on the Minister for Housing to devise and produce a new tenant purchase scheme for all Local Authority houses as currently these tenants are being deprived of the right to purchase a home for themselves”

This motion was seconded by Councillor Alan Hand.

The Members were advised that The Minister for Housing & Urban Renewal intends to introduce a new scheme for the sale of existing local authority houses to tenants on incremental purchase principles. The new scheme will be a discount scheme based on household income.

Notice of Motion No: 22/2013

Councillor Jerry Lodge proposed the following Notice of Motion

“That this Council be presented with a report indicating numbers and periods of time, for which purchasers are in arrears with their mortgages arranged with Laois County Council and furthermore what plans have we for ‘debt’ write-down for those in unsuitable situations”

This motion was seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly. The Members were advised that there are 697 housing loans, including 62 loans which have expired but have debit balances. There are no balances outstanding on 254 loans. The following is a breakdown of the number of mortgages in arrears with this Council at the end of June 2013.

Months in Arrears	No. Of Loans in Arrears
0 – 1 Months	74
1 – 3 Months	74
More Than 3 Months	295

There are 172 loans with balances less than €1,000, 103 with balances between €1,000 and €3,000 and 58 with balances between €3,000 and €5,000. 110 owe in excess of €5,000.

Laois County Council are currently engaging the MARP (Mortgage Arrears Resolution Process) to assist those with mortgage arrears. This enables those in arrears to have their level of repayments altered for a period of time until their situation changes. The options available are interest only, interest and part capital. This will ensure that their arrears are maintained at their current level until they are in a better financial position to start repaying their full instalment plus an amount off the arrears. There are 181 loans in this process.

At the moment there are no plans for 'Debt Write Down'. A 'Mortgage to Rent Scheme' has been piloted in Westmeath County Council and Dublin City Council and details are awaited. Staff Members in the Loans Section continue to liaise with all those currently in difficulty with their loan repayments.

Councillor Lodge requested that a letter issue to the Minister, Mr. Michael Noonan to write down the debts of people who cannot afford to repay them.

Notice of Motion No: 23/2013

Councillor John Joe Fennelly proposed the following Notice of Motion

“That Laois County Council in light of new Electoral Areas, review the scheme of Polling District and polling places and consult with the County Registrar on this issue and that the polling place for some people be amended in light of the changes resulting from the Boundary Committee Report 2013”

This motion was seconded by Councillor James Deegan.

The Members were advised that Laois County Council is currently examining this matter in the context of the changes arising from the Boundary Committee Report. In addition, the Council will be also be liaising with the County Registrar in relation to same.

SIGNED: _____

CATHAOIRLEACH

CERTIFIED:

**DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE
AFFAIRS**